

July 2018

Dear Friends

The season of holidays, leisure and relaxation is upon us at last and I am writing this as I sit in the dining room of the friends with whom we are spending a few days. Being on holiday at last, having tried unsuccessfully to 'get away from it all' since last November, has caused me to reflect a little on what a holiday is and what is its purpose. So I thought I might share some of my thoughts with you this month.

The word 'holiday' is a contraction of 'Holy Day' and in bygone years the only days off from the routine of work for most ordinary people were those days which were designated by the Church as 'Holy days of Obligation' when the whole community was expected to attend services in church, work ceased, the shops were closed and the people could have the rest of the day to themselves - indeed there was a punishment if they failed in their obligation.

As time went on the annual 'Works or Factory holiday' was introduced when the factories were completely shut down for a week or two at the end of July or the beginning of August and the workers and their families went on holiday - usually by train or by charabanc - to one of the rapidly growing seaside resorts up and down the country. I can still remember my mother voicing her sadness for the workers who only had their two weeks annual holiday, having spent good money to come and stay in the far south west of England, only to have it pour with rain throughout those precious two weeks.

The development of different forms of transport and the growth in the call for workers' rights for longer and/or more frequent breaks from the workplace changed their expectations of what they did 'on holiday', and package holidays to foreign parts, time shares and other types of holiday became more popular even among those who in past times were unable to partake in 'the grand tour' or world travel by sea.

All of this begs the question - 'what is a holiday and what is it for?' I remember as a child being looked down upon because, rather than go abroad for our holiday, we went to a small caravan by the sea and enjoyed the rest and relaxation, walks and swimming that could be had there. It cost very little but we returned home feeling much better for the break from our usual environment. But one doesn't have to spend the earth on going away to some exotic place on the other side of the world to have a holiday. Another of my mother's sayings was 'a change is as good as a rest' and as I get older I have to say that I can see the sense in what she said. Just having a break from one's usual routine, taking time out to 'stand and stare' as the poet put it, can be just as, if not more, valuable than travelling for miles, being caught up in queues in busy airports merely to be able to say that we have 'been on holiday.'

Holidays and holiday times provide our churches with a great opportunity to get to know visitors to our villages, to show hospitality to those who have come to our area to spend time recuperating and recharging their batteries from demanding jobs and built-up areas which sap their energy and cause stress.

The summer is a busy time for our churches, and there are several events taking place in June which might interest you :

On June 30th in the cathedral, our Curate Jo Mabey is being ordained Priest. Jo will be celebrating her first Holy Communion service as a priest on July 1st at 10.30am at Aldeburgh. Please come and support her if you can.

On July 5th Friston holds its annual 'Classics on the Green' from 3pm. Please come and join us for the fun event. Refreshments will be provided in the Village Hall, on the Green and the Chequers will be open too.

On July 22nd our Annual Summer Services at Thorpeness begin with a 'Songs of Praise' by the Meare at 4pm with the Salvation Army Band.

From July 29th for 5 Sundays until the end of August we shall meet at 9.30am in the Country Club at Thorpeness for a short service on the theme 'Journeying with God', in which we will follow the journeys of Abraham, Moses, the Prodigal Son, Paul and the Emmaus Road. We hope those who are holidaying in Thorpeness and the surrounding area will come and join us at one or more of these services.

Meanwhile I hope you all have a wonderful summer and happy holidays - however and wherever you choose to take them.

With love in Christ

Sheila